

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 SNM-02 AID-20 OMB-01 CU-04

CIAE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04

RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20 USIA-15 SAM-01 EB-11 FEA-02

AGR-20 INT-08 COME-00 LAB-06 SIL-01 NEA-10 AF-10

NIC-01 DRC-01 /215 W

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R 011231Z MAR 74

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1125

INFO AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

AMEMBASSY RANGOON

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

AMEMBASSY SEOUL

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

AMCONSUL CHIANG MAI

AMCONSUL UDORN

DIA

RUEABND DEA HQS WASHDC

CINCPAC

USSAG NKP

13TH ADVON UDORN

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 BANGKOK 3518

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINT, TH

SUBJ: POLITICAL ATMOSPHERICS IN THAILAND DURING FEBRUARY 1974

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CINCPAC FOR POLAD

SUMMAR: THE CIA CONTINUED TO BE "UNMASKED" BY THAI PRESS ARTICLES THROUGHOUT THE MONTH, BUT OTHER EVENTS DREW GREATER ATTENTION. THE WHITLAM VISIT KICKED FEBRUARY OFF WITH A "WHIFF OF FRESH AIR" WHILE THE HOPEFUL PROSPECTS FOR AN OIL DEAL, CREATED BY SHEIKH YAMANI'S VISIT, APPEAR TO HAVE COME A CROPPER. ASSISTANT SECRETARY INGERSOLL'S VISIT SET THE STAGE FOR A MORE BALANCED THAI/US RELATIONSHIP. DIEGO GARCIA GOT A SMATTERING OF ATTENTION. MINISTER OF DEFENSE, AIR CHIEF MARSHAL DAWE CHULLASAPYA, VISITED PEKING WEARING HIS THAI OLYMPIC COMMITTEE HAT. THE NEW CONSTITUTION MOVED ANOTHER NOTCH FROM THE CABINET TO THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY AND PRIME MINISTER CANDIDATES WERE AS HARD TO FIND AS DIESEL OIL UNTIL THE DEMOCRATS ELECTED SENI PRAMOJ THEIR LEADER AND PRODUCED A PARTY POLICY STATEMENT. FOR SUSTAINED ATTENTION ALL MONTH, THE SPOTLIGHT SHOWN BRIGHTLY AND PAINFULLY ON THE VILLAGE OF BAN NA SAI IN NONG KHAI PROVINCE WHICH ALLEGEDLY WAS BURNED BY RTG SECURITY FORCES. END SUMMARY.

1. PRESS ARTICLES CRITICIZING THE CIA ALMOST DROPPED FROM SIGHT IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE PRESS DURING FEB. THE GENERAL CONCENTRATION OF PRESS FIRE INSPIRED BY THE REVELATION OF THE BOGUS LETTER IN JANUARY HAS NOW BEEN REDUCED TO A FEW THAI PAPERS WHO ARE PRINTING A GRAB-BAG OF INACCURATE STORIES FED TO THEM BY RADICAL ELEMENTS. THIS PARTICULAR ISSUE HAS RUN OUT OF STEAM AND, BARRING ANY FURTHER INCIDENT GENERATED BY THE AMERICAN PRESENCE, SHOULD RECEIVE ONLY LIMITED ATTENTION FROM NOW ON.

2. AUSTRALIAN PRIME MINISTER WHITLAM DREW WIDE ACCLAIM FROM THE PUBLIC AND PRESS DURING HIS FOUR DAY VISIT TO THAILAND. THERE WERE NO CONTENTIOUS ISSUES TO DETRACT FROM THE SUCCESS OF THE HIGH LEVEL VISIT AND THE STUDENTS REMAINED PASSIVE IN MARKED CONTRAST TO THEIR JANUARY RECEPTION FOR JAPANESE PRIME MINISTER TANAKA. RTG OFFICIALS WERE VISIBLY RELIEVED AND PLEASED OVER THE OUTCOME OF THE VISIT (BANGKOK 1981).

3. SHEIK YAMANI'S ONE DAY VISIT TO BANGKOK RAISED UN-CONFIDENTIAL

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JUSTIFIED HOPES THAT THAILAND MIGHT QUICKLY OBTAIN 30 MILLION BARRELS OF CRUDE OIL. THE SAUDI ARABIAN OIL MINISTER DISCUSSED THE LONG PENDING OIL CONTRACT TO BE PAID FOR WITH THAI RICE AND CEMENT WITH DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER CHARTCHAI CHUNHAWAN. NO AGREEMENT WAS REACHED OWING TO UNRESOLVED DIFFERENCES OVER PRICE (BANGKOK 2000). MEANWHILE, THE RTG HAS BEEN OBLIGED TO AUTHORIZE A FURTHER HEFTY PRICE INCREASE FOR GAS AND OIL CONSUMERS. THIS

ACTION WAS POLITICALLY PAINFUL DURING THE CURRENT PERIOD OF INFLATIONARY PRESSURES AND COULD CONTRIBUTE TO ANOTHER ROUND OF LABOR STRIKES (BANGKOK 3395).

4. ASSISTANT SECRETARY INGERSOLL'S VISIT PROVIDED AN OPPORTUNITY TO CLEAR THE AIR AGAINST THE HEAVY CRITICISM AIMED AT THE U.S. PRESENCE DURING JANUARY. HIS DISCUSSIONS WITH THE PRIME MINISTER AND FOREIGN MINISTER REAFFIRMED THAT THE RTG WISHED TO MAINTAIN CLOSE RELATIONS WITH THE U.S. BY DOWNPLAYING THE MILITARY AND SECURITY RELATIONS. THESE REMAIN IMPORTANT, BUT IT WAS CLEAR THAT THE RTG HOPES TO EMPHASIZE ECONOMIC AND TRADE RELATIONS AS THE PREFERRED BASIS FOR LONG TERM COOPERATION BETWEEN OUR TWO GOVERNMENTS (BANGKOK 2069, 2070, AND 2185).

5. THE ANNOUNCEMENT CONCERNING US/UK INTENTIONS TO EXPAND THE DIEGO GARCIA FACILITIES FAILED TO GENERATE MUCH INTEREST OR CONTROVERSY. THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS SPOKESMAN EXPRESSED MILD MISGIVINGS BUT INDICATED THAT THE U.S. NAVAL PRESENCE WOULD ACT AS A BALANCE AGAINST THE EXISTING SOVIET FLEET IN THE INDIAN OCEAN (BANGKOK 2685).

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AGR-20 INT-08 COME-00 LAB-06 SIL-01 NEA-10 AF-10

NIC-01 DRC-01 /215 W

----- 081091

R 011231Z MAR 74

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1126

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 BANGKOK 3518

6. DEFENSE MINISTER AIR CHIEF MARSHAL DAWEE CHULLASAPYA, JOURNEYED TO PEKING AS PRESEIDENT OF THE THAI OLYMPIC COMMITTEE. HE MET WITH CHOU EN-LAI AND REPORTED PUBLICLY THAT CHOU TOLD HIM THAT THE PRC WOULD NOT IN THE FUTURE
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SUPPORT THE THAI INSURGENCY. CHINA ALSO AGREED TO SELL THAILAND AN ADDITIONAL 70,000 TONS OF DIESEL FUEL. THE ORIGINAL ORDER FOR 50,000 TONS OF DIESEL FUEL WILL BE ARRIVING THE FIRST WEEK OF MARCH. THE VISIT APPEARED TO MOVE THAI/PRC RELATIONS SLIGHTLY FORWARD, BUT ACHIEVE NO BREAK-THROUGH. SOME DOUBT HAS BEEN EXPRESSED, EVEN BY THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, THAT DAWEE GOT THINGS STRAIGHT IN HIS TALK WITH CHOU. (BANGKOK 3050).

7. THE CABINET MADE FOUR BASIC CHANGES IN THE DRAFT CONSTITUTION AND TRANSMITTED THE DOCUMENT TO THE NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY (NLA) FOR CONSIDERATION. THE DRAFT IS A UNIQUE INTERWEAVING OF THE PROVISIONS CONTAINED IN THE 1949 AND 1968 VERSIONS. THE DOCUMENT CLOSELY RESEMBLES THE 1949 VERSION EXCEPT THAT IT GIVES INCREASED POWER TO THE SENATE AND CARRIES PROVISIONS TO EXPEL ERRANT MEMBERS FROM THE LOWER HOUSE. IT ALSO ATTEMPTS TO COME TO GRIPS WITH THE CURRENT ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL CHANGES AFFECTING THAILAND. IT IS TOO EARLY TO GUESS HOW QUICKLY THE NLA CAN COMPLETE ITS CONSIDERATION OF THE DRAFT ALTHOUGH PRIME MINISTER SANYA HOPES THEIR WORK WILL BE COMPLETED WITHIN TWO MONTHS TO PERMIT PROMULGATION AND ELECTIONS BEFORE THE RAINY SEASON (BANGKOK 2540).

8. THE DEMOCRAT PARTY HELD ITS PARTY CONVENTION LATE FEBRUARY AND CONFIRMED SENI PRAMOJ AS THE PARTY LEADER. SENI IMMEDIATELY SPOKE LIKE AN ASPIRING CANDIDATE FOR PRIME

MINISTER. THE DEMOCRATS STILL APPEAR TO SUFFER FROM SPLITS AMONG THEIR MEMBERS, BOTH YOUNG AND OLD. THE PARTY POLICY STATEMENT RECEIVED PROMPT CRITICISM AMONG MEMBERS FOR BEING TOO VAGUE AND DATED. THE PARTY WILL HAVE AN UPHILL BATTLE AGAINST FINANCIAL DEPRIVATION (BANGKOK 3253).

9. THE BAN NA SAI AFFAIR HAS RECEIVED THE MOST SUSTAINED COVERAGE ALL MONTH. IT IS THAILAND'S MINI MAI LAI AND HAS CALLED INTO QUESTION THE RTG COUNTERINSURGENCY PROGRAM, THE ARMY, THE POLICE, THE COMMUNIST SUPPRESSION OPERATIONS COMMAND, AND THE THAI GOVERNMENT'S CREDIBILITY. THE INCIDENT IS BEING EXPLOITED BY POLITICIANS AND STUDENT LEADERS AND COULD PROVE TO BE THE MOST DAMAGING EVENT THAT
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HAS YET OCCURRED TO THE SANYA GOVERNMENT (BANGKOK 3035).
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESS COMMENTS, PETROLEUM, SUPPLIES, GOVERNMENT OVERTHROW, FOREIGN RELATIONS, CABINET, POLITICAL STABILITY, HEAD OF GOVERNMENT VISITS, MILITARY BASES, POLITICAL PARTIES, POLITICAL SITUATION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 01 MAR 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: WorrelSW
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974BANGKO03518
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: n/a
From: BANGKOK
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740376/aaaacspo.tel
Line Count: 245
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 5
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: WorrelSW
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 18 APR 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <18 APR 2002 by ifshinsr>; APPROVED <30-Sep-2002 by WorrelSW>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: POLITICAL ATMOSPHERICS IN THAILAND DURING FEBRUARY 1974 CONFIDENTIAL
TAGS: PFOR, PINT, TH
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005